

sons by a previous marriage, knelt in prayer after their evening meal last night.

Mrs. Harwell led as the quartet swayed and chanted, shouting fervent "amens." While reading from the Bible, Mrs. Harwell came across the Book of Matthew, Chapter 18, Verses 8 and 9:

"Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee cut them off and cast them from thee. . . . And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee. . . ."

Harwell said his wife suddenly announced that both her right eye and her left hand had "sinned." She got up, took a pair of scissors with her and left the room.

Then Harwell put a crude bandage on her wrist and mopped up some of the blood on the cabin floor. His wife asked him to bury the severed hand. He later told officers he placed the hand in a shallow hole near the cabin.

Harwell said he was so weak from excitement and the strain of the session that he could not follow her.

Amputates With Ax

She went outside to a woodshed. There she gouged at her eye with the scissors, then placed her hand against a concrete pipe and picked up a large lumber ax.

She swung three times before the hand fell to the ground. She then returned to the shack and, covered with blood but apparently in possession of her faculties, lay down on a bed.

Harwell said she aided him in further praying while he sent the oldest boy, 10, to the house of a neighbor, Mrs. Bessie Wilcox. She called a Pentecostal minister, who in turn hailed State Highway Patrolman Curtis Farr.

The maimed woman was taken to Merced.

Husband Is Idle

Police said the couple and their children were typical of hordes of itinerants from the Oklahoma and Texas "dust bowl" areas who have swarmed into California in search of work.—San Francisco News, August 24.

LETTERS

Subject: Editorial from Santa Ana Register concerning free medical service.

Santa Ana, Cal., August 24, 1938.

To the Editor:—We are mailing to you, under separate cover, a marked copy of the Santa Ana Register. The article marked speaks for itself as to the feelings of our editor here relative to medical service and practice. We have reprinted this editorial in full in the "Bulletin of the Orange County Medical Association," and felt that perhaps others may want to comment on it in their publications, as it is a very timely article.

809 North Main Street.

Very truly yours,

J. L. MAROON, M. D.

SHARING THE COMFORTS OF LIFE* Free Medical Service

With the President advocating an extension of the Social Security Act and free medical service, and a contributor contending that voters should write to their Senators demanding an Act for free medical service, the subject becomes worthy of consideration.

The contributor contends that the American Medical Association is a monopolistic group and must be broken up. Does the contributor know what a monopoly is? If there is anything that is not a monopolistic group, it is the medical profession. Great doctors are different from great businesses. When a doctor makes some new medical discovery that will be of benefit to his fellow doctors, he immediately makes it public to the world. He often even discusses it before he masters the subject himself. Not so with private business; it keeps it a secret and gives it a patent.

And in contrast with free public schools, where the teachers are inbred and can only teach what the mass, or majority, want taught, the doctors give of their time and energy to instructing the young doctors so that they also may become efficient. They certainly are in great contrast to the monopolies of government operations in general.

In another manner the doctors are anything but monopolistic. Practically every doctor gives away hundreds of dollars worth of services free every year; but certainly they are entitled to retain the right to determine to whom they will give free service.

One reason why free medical services would not be practical is that there is a vast difference in doctors, and different people want a choice of doctors to serve them. If everyone

should receive all the medical service he really could use, it would be an extremely expensive undertaking. And where would this money come from to make medicine free? If attempted to be made free, it could only be made free in a very meager and unsatisfactory manner, because there are not enough doctors of the greatest skill to give complete medical and dental service to all.

And the pay for this would not come from the rich, as the taxes are not now coming from the rich, but it would come from the great middle class of honest workers. The wealth that would be paid the doctors would have to come from this class and they now are not able to pay the running expenses of the Federal Government at the rate of \$100 per year for every worker; with our present government socialism we are eating up savings of the workers of the past. Why should we take more from the worker, who produces his right to have good, efficient medical service and more of the comforts of life and give it to those who do not produce? One of the greatest incentives for saving and sacrificing and doing without semi-luxuries is the ability to get the best medical care in case of sickness.

Political Football

And if medical services were free, each patient would be obliged to take whatever doctor the governmental bureau decided to send him. And the bureau would send, undoubtedly, the best doctor to those who helped keep them in jobs. And individuals who did not agree with those in power would get the poorest. Who would like to have a man like Franklin Roosevelt or William Gibbs McAdoo, or their agents, selecting a doctor for them? And these men who control the doctors also would control their treatment. The doctors would not be able to use their own initiative and their own judgment. There would be no competition. The medical profession would sink to bureaucratic stagnation.

If there is anything that is impractical, because of the vast difference between doctors and the need of ever and ever better medical service, it is free medicine. It would be the death knell to progress in medical advancement.—Santa Ana Register, August 19.

Subject: Costs of public institutions in San Francisco.

San Francisco, July 13, 1938.

Editor, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE,
450 Sutter Building,
San Francisco, California.

I am enclosing sheet setting forth expenditures of the Department of Public Health for 1936-1937, which I know will be of interest.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

J. C. GEIGER, M. D.,
Director of Public Health.

Total Expenditures, San Francisco Department of Public Health 1936-1937

Population estimate, San Francisco, 1936-1937.....693,000

		* Cost Per Patient Day
San Francisco Hospital.....	\$1,541,396.33	\$4.02†
Laguna Honda Home.....	589,810.03	0.858
Hassler Health Home.....	91,390.79	2.829
Emergency Hospitals.....	229,177.50	3.207
Outpatient Maternity.....	10,440.56	25.65
City Physicians.....	31,924.62	1.34
General Conservation of Public Health.....	656,959.54	
	\$3,151,099.37	

Average daily census of San Francisco Hospital.....	1,051
Average daily census of Laguna Honda Home.....	1,908
Average daily census of Hassler Health Home.....	88
Total number of patients served by Emergency Hospitals.....	71,446
Total number of patients visiting Outpatient Maternity Clinic for examination.....	859
Total number of births at home, Outpatient Obstetrical.....	242
Total City Physicians' calls.....	16,259
Average monthly total of patients on Outpatient follow-up service—San Francisco Hospital.....	580

* The above figures do not include cost of employees' retirement system; nor depreciation on buildings and equipment, which amounts are not included in Health Department budgetary accounts, but which do add to the cost to the City and County of San Francisco.

† Editor's Note.—These San Francisco costs may be compared with higher Los Angeles rates as given in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, February, 1938, page 100.

* By R. C. Hoiles.